



'Mermaids: The Body Found' Hoax Documentary Fools Audiences, Again

UInterview • July 16, 2012 • News

A controversial sci-fi documentary, *Mermaids: The Body Found*, has been making rounds on television and fooling audiences worldwide into believing that the mythical sea creatures might be real. *Mermaids: The Body Found*, which some have likened more to a horror story than a science documentary, accompanies two former National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) scientists in their investigation of unidentified underwater recordings and marine bodies, which it concludes are evidence of the potential existence of mermaids.

The two-hour special first aired on Animal Planet in May and again on Discovery Channel last night. By morning, it had topped the list of Google Trends and been featured on urban legends sites like [Snopes.com](#). The documentary style of *Mermaids: The Body Found* proved so convincing, in fact, that some viewers immediately inquired to the Department of Commerce's NOAA as to existing information on the legendary beings. "No evidence of aquatic humanoids has ever been found," the National Ocean Service answered on its [website](#), providing instead a brief overlook on the evolution of the myth.

The show's theory was first debunked in Australia in 2011, where it was originally aired, and Animal Planet quickly admitted to employing an actor in the life-like scene where a boy discovers a strange body on a Washington state beach. "The version that I saw doesn't even do viewers the courtesy of admitting that it's fake until the credits are about to roll," opined **Brad Newsome** of [The Sydney Morning Herald](#), dismissing the show's fringe 'aquatic ape' theory that was first proposed in 1942. "People love that sort of stuff, I get it. But it belongs on more tabloid channels that don't have any pretensions of scientific or historical credibility," he concluded.

The Discovery Channel, on the other hand, is defending its choice to broadcast the show again now. "What if there's a kernel of truth behind the legend of this mythic creature? Is the idea of mermaids really so far-fetched? Maybe so, maybe not," Discovery said of the sci-fi production. "The show itself, though science fiction, is based on some real events and scientific theory."